

UNITEHERE!

Local 26

33 Harrison Avenue, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02111

www.local26.org

Phone (617) 426-1515
Fax (617) 426-7684

July 16, 2014

Brian Lang
President

Henry C Green
Financial Secretary Treasurer

Karan Burton
Vice President

Richard Aliferis
Vice President

Sebastiana Montero
Recording Secretary

Trustees:
Jerry Works
Glen Noel
Letebhran Legesse

Executive Board:
Antonia David-Bernardez
Miguel de Pina
Anas Laroussi
Chui Lin Law
Marie Gina Louis
Guerda Phillipe
Maria Semedo
Jean Soulouque
Henrique Fernandes
Latifa Bekhechi
Jody Ho
Rhode Howe

Attorney General Martha Coakley
Office of Attorney General
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

RECEIVED
JUL 18 2014
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
EXECUTIVE BUREAU

Dear Madam Attorney General:

We offer this letter to express grave concerns about the proposed deal allowing Partners Health Care System to acquire the South Shore Hospital and Hallmark Health. We represent hospitality workers and their families – over 9,000 covered lives.

Our members recently made the difficult decision to limit the network of providers that our health plan covers. The biggest change was to eliminate Partners Healthcare from the network. People voted to change their doctors and eliminate highly regarded hospitals from their health plan because they understood these institutions were taking a greater and greater percentage of their earnings. The choice they made was between keeping their health plan or getting raises. By making these changes, we saved our fund approximately 18% from what we spent the same period the previous year. As a result of these changes, many of our members have received the largest pay increase in decades.

These changes were difficult for all of our members, but they were particularly difficult for members living in Lynn and other areas of the North Shore. Partners dominates the Lynn market, where many people are lower income and do not own cars. Families who previously could walk to two different Partners facilities in Lynn, must now take multiple buses and or trains to find care outside the Partners system. Even when our members were admitted to North Shore Medical Center in Lynn, they were often referred to expensive specialists at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) or Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH).

This problem exists even when people make every effort to travel to an affordable non-Partners facility. When a person is transported via ambulance, they do not have a choice of where to go. The ambulance company will bring a person to the closest facility. In the Lynn area and in a growing area in and around Boston, the closest facility will be a Partners facility, the highest cost facilities in the area.

We are concerned that Partners acquiring South Shore hospital will dramatically limit affordable access to care on the South Shore. While they are agreeing to limit pricing at the South Shore hospital, they will refer patients into MGH or BWH where prices are extremely high.

Our members understand that every increase in health care spending represents a reduction or elimination of raises. Together they made the difficult choice to eliminate the highest cost providers to invest in the long term sustainability of their health plan. This proposed agreement threatens the choice our members made.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Lang", is written over the typed name.

Brian Lang